

Strategic Plan 2017-2022

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1.0 History and Overview of Localise

Beginning in Ballyfermot in 1972, responding directly to a specific need in their community, a group of young people came together to make a difference. In subsequent years the organisation, then known as Peace Corps, expanded through Dublin and nationwide through word of mouth and the inherent enthusiasm of its young volunteers, eager to demonstrate 'Caring in Action'.

In 1997, responding to the changing nature of volunteerism and the demands from the formal education sector, the organisation developed the Localise programme.

This programme was specifically designed with a 10 week structure, making it easier and more flexible for members, volunteers, new interested parties to set up and run a community service group.

Localise is an easy to use service learning programme which engages young people aged 11 plus in local community work – inspiring them to use their talents in the service of others.

In 2007 Localise launched Ireland's first community service learning post primary schools programme, connecting classroom lessons with meaningful service to the local community. In 2015 alone Localise provided programmes in 35 schools and communities, working with more than 660 young people providing support to 48 voluntary organisations.

In 2014 Localise launched a primary school programme in 8 schools throughout Dublin. We are currently operating a waiting list of schools and community groups that want to engage with Localise.

2.0 Role of Localise

Localise works through community groups, primary and post primary schools, mobilising groups of young people, and enabling them to identify a need in their community, and support that need through practical assistance.

3.0 Financial Support

Localise is primarily funded by the Irish Government, through various grants from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.

4.0 Partners

Localise works through partnership. The partners include schools, community groups, charities and other interest groups as well as funders including the Department for Children and Youth Affairs and the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.

5.0 Organisational Development

Localise has worked with various committees and boards, and currently works with a Board of Directors. There are 9 members of this board, a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, and 3 subcommittees which are Finance, Strategic Planning and Governance.

Localise adult volunteers and youth members have a mechanism enabling them direct input into the planning, development and management of the Organisation.

6.0 Strategic Plan

6.1 Vision

Our vision is a world where all young people have the opportunity to volunteer locally and become pro-active citizens and community leaders.

6.2 Mission

To enable young people, through voluntary action, to care in their community and be of service to others.

6.3 Core Values and Beliefs

Localise works to:

- Awaken a culture of service and volunteering in young people
- Promote inclusion and integration through social engagement
- Enable young people to develop their skills and realise their self-worth
- Contributing to the development of a caring compassionate society
- Empowering young people to be decision makers, change makers and valued contributors to society

6.4 Focus

While most of our work is in Dublin, Localise claims the remit to work throughout Ireland, should resources allow.

6.5 Target Group

Our target is communities and schools in the Republic of Ireland.

6.6 Priorities for Support

- Volunteering
- Education
- Rights
- Social Justice

7.0 Strategic Issues

The following are the strategic issues for Localise for 2017 – 2022:

- Enabling young people to develop their skills, realise their self-worth and make a positive active contribution to their community.
- To deliver quality Localise programmes.
- Strengthen and grow the organisation and profile.
- Continue to promote the importance of volunteerism and integration.

7.1 Enabling young people to develop their skills, realise their self-worth and make a positive active contribution to their community

In order to realise their rights, and realise their potential, young people need to realise their self-worth and develop their skills. We do this through supporting their involvement in direct practical action which contributes to their communities. Young people often consider that assisting the vulnerable in their community is not within their power, Localise endeavours to open young people to seeing their community in a way in which they are an active, not a passive, part of that community. Our programmes serve to enable young people as young as 11 years old to make a practical difference to those living in difficult circumstances. This is a key element of the Localise programme, and will be further developed during the life of this Strategic Plan.

The following activities are proposed:

1. Programme of developing a visible demonstration of the participants' active contribution
2. Programme of identification of life skills acquired by participants
3. Programme of affirmation and recognition for young people
4. Ensure partnership agreements in place in relevant circumstances

Indicators of Success

1. High feedback scores from stakeholders. (Stakeholders include young people, clients, partners, schools, parishes and other groups.)
2. High completion rates
3. Those who participated have developed certain skill sets
4. Consolidation and rejuvenation of relevant partnership agreements

7.2 To deliver quality community service projects through our work with young people

Working with young people through Localise programmes in communities and schools, Localise proposes to continue to deliver community service projects with young people. These projects will be of direct service, in a practical manner, to some of the most vulnerable people in their communities, and serve as a mainstream integration tool.

The following activities are proposed:

1. Consolidate and rejuvenate the Localise programme in community and school settings
2. Develop programme standards and quality control for all programmes
3. Further develop the 10 week youth employment programme
4. Review the model of engagement for community groups and schools
5. Strengthen a partnership model

Indicators of Success

1. 50 Localise programmes implemented in Year 1 rising to between 100 and 250 programmes in Year 5
2. Localise programme reviewed, learning outcomes identified and programme updated (Year 3 of 5)
3. Programme standards and quality control policy developed and applied to all programmes
4. Partnership model and policy developed
5. Community engagement policy developed
6. Capture our success in hard to measure areas including success in citizenship programme, social inclusion, social mobility and social engagement

7.3 Strengthen and grow the organisation and profile

All modern community organisations need to have a proper governance structure. Localise is working towards this.

The following activities are proposed:

Expand the programme nationally

1. Update financial systems
2. Continue to update Child Protection Policy and Procedures in line with current legislation
3. Update Guidelines for Financial Management
4. Continue to update Social Media policy
5. Develop the following policies
 - a. Fraud Policy
 - b. Partnership policy
 - c. Social Inclusion policy
 - d. Equality policy

6. Develop definitions and guidelines on;
 - a. Forms of Localise memberships
 - b. Forms of Localise groups
 - c. Forms of Localise programmes
7. Strengthen the Board of Directors in the following areas: selection and election processes, training, key skills and organisational representation
8. Ensure operational plans for all sections of the organisation
9. Offer continuing professional development (CPD) to all staff annually
10. Update and maintain website
11. Funding and resources management
 - a. Ensure sustainable funding over the lifetime of this plan and into the next
 - b. Regularise funding with current funders
 - c. Access multi-annual funding
 - d. Diversify funding resources
12. Put aside 4-6 months' running costs as Reserves
13. Address staff retention issues; examine salaries, human resource issues and staffing levels
14. Review and update volunteer recruitment systems for members and volunteers
15. Develop a Risk Register

Indicators of Success

1. The following policies updated, developed and approved:
 - a. Child Protection
 - b. Financial Management
 - c. Governance
 - d. Fraud
 - e. Partnership
2. Board of Directors Governance Handbook programme including Director selection, election, rotation and officer terms defined
3. Practical guidelines developed and implemented on Localise memberships and Localise groups
4. Operational plans complete and implemented in all sections
5. Website updated regularly, other social media updated frequently
6. Partnership Policy developed and implemented
7. Funding diversified
8. Reserves in place
9. Programme expansion plan in place and implemented
10. Monitoring and Evaluation plans in place and implemented
11. HR plan in place
12. Risk register in place

7.4 Continue to promote the importance of volunteerism and integration

The following activities are proposed:

1. Further develop and update equality and integration policy including programme procedures and demonstrating evidence of social integration through the Localise methodology
2. Further develop and maintain relationships with other volunteering and social integration organisations
3. Further develop policies and procedures for Localise Volunteers:
 - a. Volunteer recruitment processes
 - b. Further focus on retaining adult volunteers
4. Provide a range of training courses for volunteers and staff annually
 - a. Child Protection
 - b. Best practice in volunteering in a youth service setting
 - c. First aid
5. Further develop a system of volunteer recognition and affirmation
6. Ensure website is up to date, fit for purpose and represents youth in action, and the youth voice

Indicators of Success

1. Partnership agreements in place
2. Volunteer policies and procedures in place and up to date
3. Training courses developed in the following areas:
 - a. Child Protection
 - b. Best practice working with youth services
 - c. Courses on these run quarterly / annually
4. Programme of volunteer recognition further developed and implemented
5. Website is current, maintained and representative
6. Relationships with other organisations maintained

8.0 Implementation of Plan

This plan will be presented to the Board of Directors at their November 2016 meeting. It will be adjusted and finalised in the fortnight after that, and officially adopted in January 2017.

9.0 Risk

Localise includes the following types of risk in its risk register:

Funding
 Governance
 Human Resources
 Leaders
 Participants
 Operational Management

10.0 Appendix

Appendix 1: Implementation Plan for Activities

| Strategic Issue no: | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Key Actions | Person Responsible | Resources needed | Completion date | Activities | | | | | Review |
| | | | | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | |
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| Human Resources | Over reliance on key staff members | 4 | 5 | Develop HR policy. Ensure management duties spread across staff, identify deputies | CEO and Board |
| | Staff retention | 4 | 4 | Review staff working conditions including pay, holidays working hours and training | CEO and Board |
| | Inconsistent continuing professional development for staff | 4 | 4 | Ensure all staff obtain CPD annually | CEO and Board |
| | Health and safety issues affect work, including driving, evening work, suitability of venues, use of equipment | 3 | 3 | Develop Health and Safety guidelines for staff and volunteers | CEO and Board |
| Leaders | Retention | 4 | 4 | Develop policy on working with Leaders, including recruitment and definition of role, time to be served, and termination of arrangements | CEO and Board |
| | Child Protection processes not robust enough | 2 | 5 | Ensure all adult volunteers have garda clearance, and trained in Child Protection. Ensure and Child Protection Policies and procedures are in line with legislation | Board, CEO and Staff |
| Volunteers | Retention of youth in community groups | 3 | 5 | Ensure clear process of progression through the 'ranks' of the programme for all young people involved, affirmation and recognition | Staff, CEO |

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| | Quality of experience varied | 3 | 3 | Ensure quality control mechanisms in all aspects of the programme, and adequately monitor same | Staff, CEO |
| | Reputational Risk for Localise due to behaviour of participants | 3 | 4 | Monitor this risk at all interactions, ensure staff and adult volunteers understand the guidelines in dealing with any incidents | Staff, CEO |
| Operational Management | Over reliance on key staff | 4 | 4 | Ensure management duties spread across staff, identify deputies, implement acceptable work practices for all staff based on industry norms | CEO and Board |
| | Programme quality and approach not uniform, and in some cases poor | 3 | 4 | Ensure programme quality maintained throughout the programme, avoid overstressing staff, implement programme monitoring and review systems | CEO and staff with Board oversight |